

REMARKS

This is a full and timely response to the non-final Official Action mailed 13 December 2005. Applicant hereby requests re-examination of the application and offers the foregoing amendments. Reconsideration of the application in light of the above amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Claims Status:

By the forgoing amendment, claims 23, 31, 32, and 36-39 have been amended. Claim 33 has been cancelled. Previously, claims 25-30 and 41-46 were cancelled. Thus, claims 1-24, 31-32, 34-40 and 47-53 are currently pending for further action.

Claim Objections:

Claim 23 was objected to due to a minor informality. Claim 23 has been amended herein to correct the informality noted. This amendment is not intended to, and does not, alter or narrow the scope of claim 23 in any way. Following entry of this amendment, claim 23 is thought to be no longer subject to objection and notice to that effect is respectfully requested.

Prior Art:

With regard to the prior art, claims 31-32, 35-36 and 40 were rejected as anticipated under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) by Pan. Applicants have amended claim 31 to include the limitations of claim 33 which was objected to but indicated as allowable if placed in independent form. Accordingly, claim 31 is now believed patentable over the art made of record. Claim 33 has been cancelled. Claims 32, 35-36 and 40 depend upon claim 31 and are

believed patentable based at least on the patentability of claim 31, as amended. Withdrawal of the rejection under 35 USC 102(e) and allowance of these claims is respectfully requested.

Claim 34 was rejected as unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) by Pan and in view of Culp. Claim 34 depends upon claim 31, as amended, and is believed patentable based at least on the patentability of claim 31, as amended. Withdrawal of the rejection under 35 USC 103(a) and allowance of claim 34 is respectfully requested.

On page 5 of the non-final Office Action, the Examiner indicated that claims 1-24 and 47-53 were allowable. Also, the Examiner indicated that claims 33 and 37-39 were objected to as being dependent on a rejected base claim but would be allowable if placed in independent format including all the limitations of the base and intervening claims. Applicants have amended claim 31 to include the limitations of claim 33 and have cancelled it accordingly. Applicants have amended claims 37-39 to now correct claim dependency appropriately. Applicants wish to express their appreciation to the Examiner for this indication of allowance.

Conclusion:

Applicants believe their claims as amended are patentable over the art of record, and that the amendments made herein are within the scope of a search properly conducted under the provisions of MPEP 904.02. Accordingly, claims 1-24, 31-32, 34-40 and 47-53 are deemed to be in condition for allowance, and such allowance is respectfully requested.

If for any reason the Examiner finds the Application other than in a condition for allowance, the Examiner is respectfully requested to call Applicants' undersigned representative at the number listed below to discuss the steps necessary for placing the application in condition for allowance.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required, or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 08-2025. Should such fees be associated with an extension of time, Applicants respectfully request that this paper be considered a petition therefore.

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Respectfully Submitted,

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